

East of the Sun, West of the Moon



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Chapter 1

The bear



Long ago and far away, in a land of trolls and magic, there lived a poor farmer. His house was falling down, his family were in rags and his money was almost gone. Now winter was coming on ...

“Listen to the wind and the rain!” the farmer wailed. “What can I do? Won’t somebody please help me?”

TAP! TAP! TAP!

There, at the farmhouse door, stood a big white bear.

“I’m lonely,” the bear said. “Lend me Astrid, your daughter, and I’ll make you and your family rich.”





“Rich?” said the farmer.

“Very rich,” said the bear. “I’ll look after her well, I promise. Tell me on Thursday if you agree.”

Well, the family was so poor they had to agree. On Thursday, Astrid found herself clinging to the bear’s stiff white fur as he padded away from the farmhouse.

Chapter 2

At the castle



All day long they travelled. Then, as night fell, they came to a steep cliff. Or was it the wall of a castle? Soon they were in a splendid hall made of the finest gold and silver.





“Take this bell, Astrid,” said the bear. “If there is anything you want, just ring it.”

“All I want is a soft bed and sweet dreams,” Astrid yawned.



That night she dreamed of a handsome young prince who sat beside her bed while she slept. The same thing happened the next night, and the night after that.

All day long Astrid rang the bell for anything she wanted. And all night long the Prince sat beside her in her dreams. On the fourth day, Astrid sent for the bear. “I’m homesick,” she told him. “I want to see my family.”





“Will you promise to come back?” said the bear. “And will you promise not to share any secrets with your mother?”

“I promise, Bear.”

So the bear took Astrid home.

Chapter 3

Two promises



Astrid's first promise was easy. Her family was now rich and happy so she knew she must stay with the bear.

Her second promise was harder. In a land of trolls and magic, a girl can't help sharing secrets with her mother.





“I dreamed of a prince every night,” said Astrid. “Or was he real all along?”

“Ah ...” her mother smiled. “Next time, light this magic candle. But don’t spill any magic wax on him!”

“I won’t!” Astrid laughed.

Astrid loved the visit to her family. But now she had a plan, she was keen to get back to the castle.

Chapter 4

Candle wax



That night, at the gold and silver castle, Astrid went to bed very early. She kept her eyes shut tight until she heard somebody sit beside her bed. Then she lit the magic candle ... much too quickly.



The Prince was real all right. As real as the three drops of magic wax Astrid had spilled on his shirt.

“Oh, Astrid,” he groaned. “What have you done? A troll called Long Nose put a spell on me. By day I’m a white bear and by night a royal prince. Now you’ve spilled some magic, the spell can’t be broken. I’ll have to marry Long Nose!”



“How can I save you?” Astrid sobbed.



“You can’t,” said the Prince, sadly. “Long Nose will lock me in her castle until our wedding day. It lies east of the sun and west of the moon, so nobody can find me.”

“I can still try ...” said Astrid.



Chapter 5

Three hags

 Next morning, the Prince and the castle had vanished. So  had all of Astrid's fine clothes. Dressed in her old rags, she set off at once.

"East of the sun and west of the moon ..." she said.
"Somebody must know where Long Nose lives."

She walked and walked and walked.



At last, on top of a high mountain, she met an old hag.

"I've never heard of Long Nose," the old hag said. "You'd better ask my big sister who lives on the next mountain. Here, take this golden apple to bring you good luck."

"Thank you," Astrid said.

The old hag's sister was no help at all.

"I've never heard of Long Nose," she said. "You'd better ask my other sister who lives on the next mountain. Here, take this golden comb to bring you luck."

"Thank you," Astrid said.



But the third old hag shook her head as well.

"I've never heard of Long Nose," she said. "My sisters were silly to send you. Here, take this golden spinning wheel to bring you good luck."

"Thank you," Astrid said.

Now she was all alone again, with a golden apple, a golden comb and a golden spinning wheel to carry.

Chapter 6

Four winds



“East of the sun and west of the moon!” Astrid cried. “Does nobody know where I can find Long Nose?”

“I do,” hissed the East Wind.

“Can you take me there, sir?” Astrid asked eagerly.

“Only if my brothers help me, Astrid: the West Wind, the South Wind and the North Wind.”

“Please,” Astrid begged.

So the East Wind swept her into the air. She flew from wind to wind; East to West to South to North, over hills and seas and forests.

Then the North Wind set her down.

"Thank you, winds," said Astrid. "But where is it you've lifted me?"


"East of the sun and west of the moon," the North Wind smiled. "This is where Long Nose lives."

"Goodbye!" waved Astrid as he gusted off.



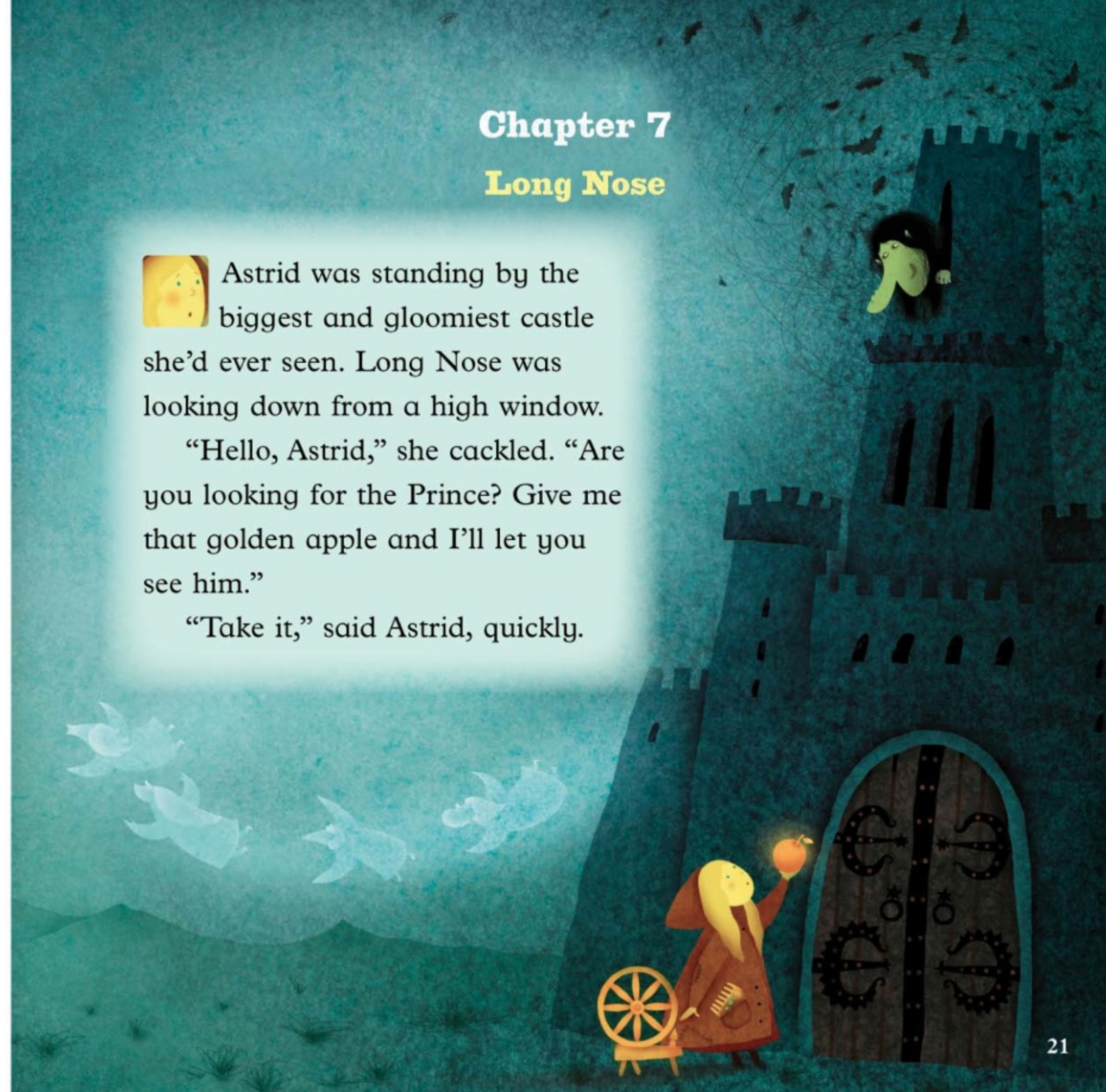
Chapter 7

Long Nose

 Astrid was standing by the biggest and gloomiest castle she'd ever seen. Long Nose was looking down from a high window.

"Hello, Astrid," she cackled. "Are you looking for the Prince? Give me that golden apple and I'll let you see him."

"Take it," said Astrid, quickly.





Inside the castle, she found the Prince in a deep, deep sleep. He was holding an empty silver cup.

“Was that a magic drink?” Astrid wondered. “If it was, I’ll never wake him.”

The Prince slept all night long.

The next day, Astrid offered Long Nose the golden comb. “It’ll be yours forever,” she said, “if you’ll let me visit the Prince again.”

“Why not?” sniffed Long Nose. “I shall keep him fast asleep until our wedding day!”

So it was a magic drink in the silver cup ...



That night, while the Prince dozed, Astrid made a tiny hole in the cup.

“This time, I want to spill some magic,” she said. “It’s the only way to wake him. Long Nose is so greedy, I’ll give her the golden spinning wheel for one last visit.”

Long Nose agreed at once.

“What do I care?” she said. “Tomorrow the Prince and I will be married.”



At bedtime, Long Nose didn’t spot the tiny hole as she filled the silver cup. Nor did she spot the magic drink leaking out.

Later, after Long Nose had gone, it was easy for Astrid to wake the Prince.



“Astrid!” the Prince exclaimed. “Have you come to save me?”

“If I can,” Astrid said. “But how do we get rid of Long Nose?”

“With a test of true love,” said the Prince. “The winner will be the one who can clean the magic wax from my shirt. That’s the person I’ll marry!”

Chapter 8

The test



At first, Long Nose was very cross. But she was far too proud to say no to the test.

“Anybody can wash a shirt!” she sneered. “Bring me a tub, some soap and a scrubbing brush.”





Long Nose had spoken much too soon. The harder she scrubbed, the blacker the shirt became. In the end she screeched “Help me, trolls!”

Every troll in the castle came running. But the shirt got blacker and blacker.

“Stop scrubbing!” Long Nose yelled. “Let Astrid try. How can a girl like her beat trolls like us?”



With true love, that’s how.

Astrid dipped the Prince’s shirt in some cool, clear water. Instantly, it was as white as snow again.



Long Nose and her team of trolls were beaten. They were never seen again, not even east of the sun and west of the moon. Everybody else was invited to the royal wedding; family, friends, the three hags and the four winds as well.



Afterwards, the gold and silver castle appeared again and Astrid and her Prince went back to their home. There they lived happily ever after.

What can be more magical than that?

